

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 RABAT 00621 041631Z

44

ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NEAE-00 IO-03 NSC-05 NSCE-00

INR-05 CIAE-00 PM-03 SP-02 L-01 EUR-08 OMB-01 ACDA-10

DODE-00 AF-04 /064 W

----- 046980

P R 041535Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7597

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

AMCONSUL TANGIER

USMISSION USUN

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

FOSIF ROTA

COMSIXTHFLT

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 0621

LIMDIS

USCINCEUR AND CINCUSNAVEUR ALSO FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PBOR MO SP SS AG MR FR

SUBJECT: MOROCCAN INTENTIONS IN SAHARA

1. SUMMARY. GOM MINISTER TELLS US PRIVATELY THAT MOROCCAN
MILITARY SWEEP IN SAHARA BEING CONDUCTED IN DELIBERATE MANNER
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 RABAT 00621 041631Z

TO GIVE TIME FOR CURRENT MEDIATION EFFORTS. HE ALSO STRESSES

MILITARY OPERATIONS ARE TO STOP SHORT OF ALGERIAN BORDER. AT SAME TIME, MOROCCANS TAKING TOUGH PUBLIC LINE AGAINST ANY CONCESSIONS TO ALGERIA THAT WOULD UNDERCUT MOROCCAN SUZERAINITY OVER ITS PORTION OF SAHARA, AND ANOTHER GOM MINISTER HAS PRIVATELY EXPRESSED BELIEF ALGERIANS READY TO NEGOTIATE ON ALMOST ANY BASIS THAT WOULD GET THEM OUT OF PRESENT IMBROGLIO. END SUMMARY

2. IN CONVERSATION FEB 3, MINISTER OF FINANCE BENSLIMANE TOLD ME THAT MOROCCAN FORCES WERE CONDUCTING CURRENT MOP UP OPERATIONS IN SAHARA WITH DELIBERATE SPEED AND AVOIDING PRECIPITATE MOVES IN ORDER TO GIVE CURRENT TALKS INVOLVING ARAB NEGOTIATORS A CHANCE. HE INDICATED THAT MAHBES, EASTERNMOST POLISARIO STROMMHOLD BEFORE ALGERIAN BORDER, WOULD BE FINAL MOROCCAN GOAL. HE EXPLAINED THAT MAHBES STRONGLY FORTIFIED AND OTHER SAHARAN AREAS WOULD HAVE TO BE CONSOLIDATED BEFORE MOROCCAN ASSAULT ON THAT POINT. FOLLOWING CAPTURE OF MAHBES, ACCORDING TO BENSLIMANE, MOROCCANS WOULD HALT THEIR OPERATIONS ON THEIR SIDE BORDER. WHILE MOROCCANS HAD LONG-STANDING TERRITORIAL CLAIM TO TINDOUF, BENSLIMANE ELABORATED, THIS WAS A "SEPARATE" ISSUE FOR GOM.

3. QUERIED ON POSSIBLE ELEMENTS OF A NEGOTIATED MOROCCAN/ALGERIAN SETTLEMENT, BENSLIMANE ARGUED THAT ALGERIANS SHOULD WITHDRAW FROM SAHARA IN ANY CASE AND THAT THIS NOT A VALID QUID PRO QUO. HE DID NOT COME KL WITH ANY IDEAS FOR MOROCCAN CONCESSIONS TO ASSURAGE ALGERIANS. (THIS TOUGH LINE IS IN HARMONY WITH PUBLIC MOROCCAN POSITION BEING UNDERSCORED IN PRESS THAT MOROCCO WILL ENGAGE IN "NO BARGAINING OR CONCESSIONS" ON ITS SOVEREIGNTY OVER SAHARA.")

4. CONCERNING UN MISSION TO SAHARA LED BY SWEDISH UN PERMREP REYDBECK, BENSLIMANE STRESSED THAT THIS MISSION PURELY FOR FACT-FINDING PURPOSES AND NOT TO REOPEN LEGAL STATUS OF SAHARA. (THIS THEME HAS ALSO BEEN HEAVILY EMPHASIZED BY PRESS IN PAST FEW DAYS).

5. IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION FEB 3 COOPERATION MINISTER MOHAMED BENHIMA COMMENTED "FOR MY PERSONAL INFORMATION" THAT ALGERIANS NOW IN A MOOD TO NEGOTIATE FOR "TWO ASHTRAYS" (I.E., ON BASIS OF SLIGHTEST FACE-SAVING DEVICE) IF THAT WOULD GET THEM OUT OF THEIR CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 RABAT 00621 041631Z

CURRENT IMBROGLIO.

6. COMMENT: MOROCCAN RESISTANCE TO BARGAINING AND CONCESSIONS ON SAHARA HAS APPEARANCE OF BEING FIRMLY ROOTED, AND IT THEREFORE DIFFICULT TO CONCEIVE OF NEGOTIATING PACKAGE WITH ADEQUATE ELEMENTS FOR BOTH SIDES. ALGERIANS WOULD SEEM TO NEED SOME FACE-SAVING DEVICE ON CONSULTATION OF SAHARANS TO GET MATTERS MOVING SUBSTANTIVELY. MOROCCAN INSISTENCE THAT CONSULTATION HAS ALREADY

OCCURRED MAKES THIS ISSUE DIFFICULT, THOUGH PERHAPS NOT IMPOSSIBLE,
FOR GOM TO REOPEN.

7. AS TO CURRENT MILITARY OPERATIONS, MOROCCANS CONTINUE TO
DEMONSTRATE RECOGNITION OF PARTICULAR SENSITIVITY VIS-A-VIS
ALGERIA OF AN ASSAULT ON MAHBES. AT SAME TIME THEY GIVE
IMPRESSION OF STRONG DETERMINATION TO GO THROUGH WITH MOPPING
UP OF POLISARIO, ALTHOUGH THEY PROBABLY PLAN TO DO SO AT A PACE
DESIGNED TO GIVE ALGERIANS ADEQUATE TIME TO PULL OUT AND AVOID
FURTHER DIRECT CONFRONTATION IN SAHARA, IF GOA DECIDES TO DO SO.
BENSLIMANE'S REMARK ABOUT STOPPING MOROCCAN
OPERATIONS THIS SIDE OF BORDER TENDS TO CONFIRM SUCH
AN ASSESSMENT AND FITS IN WITH APPARENT MOROCCAN DESIRE TO
AVOID PROVOKING ALGERIANS BEYOND WHAT GOM SEES AS NECESSARY
TO NAIL DOWN ITS CONTROL OF SAHARA.
NEUMANN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TERRITORIAL CLAIMS, COMBAT OPERATIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976RABAT00621
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760042-0607
From: RABAT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760283/aaaacusy.tel
Line Count: 131
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 APR 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <10 AUG 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MOROCCAN INTENTIONS IN SAHARA
TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, MO, SP, SS, AG, MR, FR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006